



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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VEGETABLE FEATURE: Rutabagas

by Andrea Yoder

Nature has a way of giving us what we need in its appropriate season. As we move into the winter months, we no longer have the luxury of eating fresh veggies out of the field. Instead, we turn to foods that store well and in preparation for the long, cold months we stock our root cellars full of vegetables that can survive the winter. Not as many people these days have a root cellar, but you can use your crisper drawer for a similar purpose! Rutabagas, along with turnips, are two of the best storing root crops and the stars of this week's "**Weed Em' & Reap**" newsletter article. Take a moment to read more about these two underappreciated vegetables and you'll quickly learn they have been an important part of winter diets in northern regions for a long time!

When you are ready to use your rutabagas, trim off the neck on the top. Cut the vegetable lengthwise in halves or quarters so it is more manageable to handle. Trim off the exterior skin using a paring knife. You'll find the flesh to be a beautiful golden color, firm and crisp. When cooking rutabagas, less is often more. Don't try to make rutabagas fancy, that's just not their style. This week's recipes reflect tradition and feature dishes from both Finnish and Norwegian culture. Rutabagas can be eaten raw, boiled, stir-fried, roasted, baked and braised. Elizabeth Schneider wrote, "There is really just one way not to cook it: in lots of water for a long time..." Perhaps this cooking method is responsible for turning up many noses over the years. If you overcook rutabagas, they will quickly go from tender, sweet and delicious to mushy, strong flavored and stinky. Rutabagas are also often used in soups, gratins, roasted root mixes, and root mashes, but can also make a really nice winter salad or stir-fry. Rutabagas pair well with butter & cream (big surprise), ginger, lemon, nutmeg, parsley, sage, thyme, apples, pears, other root vegetables, bacon and other smoked and roasted meats. Rutabagas should be stored in a cold environment with moisture to keep them from dehydrating. If stored properly they can be preserved for months. If you notice your roots starting to get floppy or soft, just soak them in a bowl of water in your refrigerator and they'll spring back to life. Don't let them shrivel up in the crisper drawer this year, give them a try! You just might find you like them and will miss them come spring!

What's In The Box?

SMALL YELLOW ONIONS: These little onions are just perfect for adding to pot roast or other braised meats this winter. Just peel them and add them whole or cut them in half.

ITALIAN GARLIC: Include a little garlic in your meals each day and you'll be giving your immune system a little extra protection from winter colds.

PURPLE & ORANGE CARROTS: This week's carrot varieties are bolero and purple sun. Purple Sun does not have quite the same purple intensity as the black nebula carrots we sent earlier this year, but it does look lovely when prepared alongside orange carrots. Use it in a raw carrot salad or roasted root vegetable blend.

MURASAKI OR COVINGTON SWEET POTATOES: Murasaki is a Japanese sweet potato with purple skin and white flesh. We love this potato, even though it's very challenging to grow in our region. You'll find the flesh is a little more dry than orange sweet potatoes, but they have a great flavor and are still sweet potatoes! Honestly, they're best just baked and served with butter and salt. Covington is an orange flesh variety.

ASSORTED POTATOES: This week's boxes will contain either Peter Wilcox or Purple Majesty. Store your potatoes in a cool, dry location and keep them in the paper bag to protect from exposure to light which will cause them to turn green and/or sprout.

HEART OF GOLD SQUASH: We trialed this squash for the first time this year. It resembles Festival or Sugar Dumpling and is said to be an improved acorn type variety. One thing we noticed is their extended storage potential!

GREEN SAVOY CABBAGE: Green Savoy cabbage is this week's 'leafy green'. There are many ways to use cabbage throughout the winter. Shred it for raw salads, use it to make eggrolls, make vegetable soup, creamed cabbage - the list goes on and on! If you receive green savoy cabbage and still have one from a November delivery, don't fret. It's meant to store, so wrap it in a plastic bag or the like to keep it from dehydrating and keep it in the refrigerator until you're ready to use it.

CELERIAC: This will be the final celeriac of the season. If you find celeriac intimidating, you can put it in the swap box for someone else to enjoy, but I do hope you'll reconsider and give it a try. To make it easier to peel, cut it into quarters or even eighths. Smaller pieces are more manageable to peel with a paring knife. Celeriac makes a silky smooth, delicate soup, or feed the pieces through your food processor with a shredder attachment and you can turn it into a tasty creamy slaw in 10 minutes!

SCARLET TURNIPS: This is the bright pink root vegetable in this week's box. You can peel it if you like, but I seldom do. This turnip has rosy white flesh and is mild and sweet. It is beautiful and tasty when roasted, but is also a great stir-fry vegetable or may be added to any vegetable soup or stew. Not sold on turnips? I encourage you to give this one a try. There are approximately 1½ pounds in the box.

RUTABAGA: This is the roundish vegetable with buttery yellow skin and purple shoulders. It is also this week's featured vegetable and is one of the stars of our main article in this week's "**Weed Em' and Reap**" newsletter! Take a minute to read a little more about this underappreciated root and check out the featured recipes! There are approximately 1½ pounds in the box.

Finnish Rutabaga Casserole (Lanttulaatikko)

Yield: 6 servings

6 cups peeled & diced rutabaga OR	¼ cup dry bread crumbs	1 tsp salt
3 cups rutabaga and 3 cups peeled & diced potatoes	¼ cup heavy cream	2 eggs, beaten
	½ tsp ground nutmeg	3 Tbsp butter

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 2 ½-quart casserole and set aside.
2. Cook the rutabagas and/or potatoes together in salted water to cover, just until soft and tender.
3. Drain and mash with a potato masher. Soak the bread crumbs in the cream and stir in the nutmeg, salt, and beaten eggs.
4. Blend mixture with the mashed rutabagas and potatoes. Turn into the casserole dish. Dot the top with butter. Bake for 1 hour or until the top is lightly browned.

This recipe was borrowed from Beatrice Ojankangas' book, **Homemade: Finnish Rye, Feed Sack Fashion, and Other Simple Ingredients From My Life In Food**. Beatrice grew up in rural northern Minnesota, the oldest of ten children. In addition to a lifetime of experience cooking for her family, she also has an extensive list of accomplishments as a food writer and recipe developer. While she comes from Finnish descent, she also lived in Finland for a short while. During this time she researched and collected recipes that she compiled and published as, **The Finnish Cookbook**.

Mashed Rutabagas (Kålrabistappe)

Yield: 4-6 servings

1.5 pounds rutabaga (kålraabi)	1 Tbsp plus 1 tsp salt (or to taste)	¼ tsp black pepper
8 oz carrots (2-3 medium)	¼ cup whipping cream	¼ tsp nutmeg
1 qt water	2 Tbsp butter	

1. Peel and cut rutabaga and carrots into pieces (large dice). Place the vegetables into a pan and cover with a quart of water seasoned with 1 Tbsp salt. Bring the water to a boil and cook the rutabagas and carrots just until tender and soft. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the cooking water.
2. Mash the rutabagas and carrots by hand using a potato masher.
3. Stir in cream, butter, pepper, and nutmeg. If needed, add the additional teaspoon of salt and maybe a dash of the reserved liquid, to taste.

This recipe was adapted from one originally printed in the Oct. 21, 2016, issue of **The Norwegian American**. It was submitted by Lillian Laila Owren of Kristiansand, Norway.

Rutabaga & Apple Salad (Kålraabi Salat med Epler)

Yield: Makes a large bowl (7-8 cups)

	<u>Vinaigrette:</u>
1 medium or several small rutabaga (about 1 pound)	⅓ cup oil (neutral vegetable oil or hazelnut oil)
2 tart apples, cored	¼ cup apple juice
¼ red cabbage (about 2 cups, sliced thinly)	2 tsp Dijon mustard
½ cup hazelnuts, whole	1 ½ tsp apple cider vinegar
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste	1 Tbsp honey

1. Peel and cut the rutabaga into matchsticks by hand or with a mandolin. Cut the apples into matchsticks as well. Thinly slice the red cabbage. Place rutabaga, apples and cabbage in a serving bowl. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper and toss to combine.
2. Place the hazelnuts in a large frying pan over medium-high heat to toast. Shaking once and a while to prevent burning. When starting to turn a golden brown remove from the pan. (I like to add the skins and all, but you can remove the skins if you wish by rubbing the hazelnuts between your palms or in a tea towel.) Roughly chop the nuts and add to the salad.
3. Combine all the ingredients for the vinaigrette in a small bowl and whisk well. Pour over the salad and gently mix until everything is covered. Serve immediately.

This recipe was borrowed from **northwildkitchen.com**, a blog written by Nevada Berg. Nevada grew up in Utah, but now lives in the beauty of Norway where she enjoys foraging, exploring, and cooking. The pictures and stories on her blog are beautiful!